

Groups question crusade against restaurant

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — In a sign that the debate over Chick-fil-A is not going away, traditional groups in the four states voting on same sex marriage this fall apparently are set to make the homosexual rights campaign against the restaurant an issue, arguing that the intimidation and name-calling aimed at Chick-fil-A were only a preview of what will happen to traditionalists if marriage is re-defined.

In recent days pro-traditional marriage

groups in Maine and Washington state have sent emails to supporters referencing the Chick-fil-A controversy, with one of them warning "there will be profound consequences" if gay marriage is legalized.

The National Organization for Marriage, a national group working in all four states to defend the traditional definition of marriage, also has referenced Chick-fil-A in multiple emails, saying in the latest one, "Let's bring the Chick-Fil-A crowds to

the polls in November!"

Maine, Washington, and Maryland are voting in November on whether to legalize same sex marriage, while voters in Minnesota will decide whether to amend the state constitution to define marriage as between a man and a woman.

A victory for gay marriage supporters in any of them would be landmark, as the issue has lost in all 32 states where it's been on the ballot.

The emails also reference pushback against Chick-fil-A by the mayors of Boston, Chicago, Washington D.C., and San Francisco.

"Maine voters should pay close attention to what is happening with the Chick-fil-A situation south of us along the I-95 corridor because this is what will happen

see CRUSADE on p. 11



CARRYING THE WORD — A street preacher challenges Olympic crowds with the Word of God at Stratford train station. (BP photo)

So. Baptists flood Olympics with the Gospel message

LONDON — "We lit the flame and lit up the world."

Doug Shaw had to smile a little when London 2012 chairman Lord Coe closed the Olympics with those words Aug. 12, because Shaw is hoping that's exactly what happened.

As part of More Than Gold, a joint effort of Christian churches worldwide, Shaw saw about 2,500 evangelical Christians reach out to thousands of Games goers in London. Volunteers met tourists, visitors, athletes, and locals, and they ministered among London's huge immigrant population.

Shaw and others are hoping that soon some of the people they met might even take the Gospel back to the countries they came from — to "light up the world."

"The world was here, and the cordial atmosphere was an excellent opportunity for sharing one's faith," said Shaw, who served as Olympics volunteer coordinator for Southern Baptists and worked through More Than Gold.

About 450 Southern Baptist volunteers have been on the ground in London — an epic milestone, Shaw said. "To my knowledge, this is the largest Southern Baptist volunteer response to any single sporting

event outside the U.S."

It was a response that matched the numbers; the 2012 Summer Olympics was teeming with people. Seven million people saw some part of the Games live during the competition's 16-day run, according to BBC News. That doesn't include the thousands who watched on big screens in parks all across the greater London area.

London's Underground trains had their busiest days ever, BBC reported. Officials estimate visitors will be leaving via London's airports at a rate of 200,000 people a day for a while.

The sheer numbers and friendly spirit surrounding the Olympics provided endless opportunities for Christians to engage in conversations with the masses, Shaw said. Volunteers have talked, counseled, shared, provided meals, and offered hope, he said.

In one instance, discussions at an open café "resulted in 400 guests visiting a local church for the first time."

Volunteers helping run events like this have meant "strong engagement" for London's local churches, Shaw said. "This type of ministry has gone extremely well."

New SBC president spends time with Billy Graham in his N.C. home

MONTREAT, N.C. (BP) — Billy Graham established a precedent early in his ministry during America's days of racial segregation by only proceeding with a crusade if blacks and whites could sit together in the audience.

Graham's standard resonated with Fred Luter during a July 26 visit with the evangelist at Graham's home in Montreat, N.C. Graham applauded Luter's election as the first African American president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Dr. Graham was really excited about the future of the Southern Baptist Convention, and he was real excited that the convention had elected an African American president," Luter said. "He's always been one who believed in the different ethnic groups. There was a time when he wouldn't even have his crusades in a town if other ethnic groups were not included. He wanted to make it inclusive, so he was really excited about [the election]."

While race relations was not the main topic of the informal meeting, Luter said Graham did mention his support of racial equality in South Africa.

"[We talked about] when he went to Africa to help end apartheid there and how he got a chance to meet Nelson Mandela," Luter recounted. "He even mentioned the fact that [Mandela] just made a birthday. He said, 'He's 94 and I'm 93. He's got one year ahead of me.'"

Luter, who preached at nearby LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, visited Graham at the invitation of Don Wilton, pastor of First Church in Spartanburg, S.C., where Graham is a member.

Luter and his wife Elizabeth spent 45 minutes with Graham, Wilton, and family members.

"First of all I was just kind of amazed that when I walked in



LUTER VISITS GRAHAM — Southern Baptist Convention President Fred Luter (left) visited Billy Graham (center) at the evangelist's home in Montreat, N.C. Luter received an invitation through Don Wilton, (right), pastor of First Church in Spartanburg, S.C., where Graham is a member. (BP photo)

the house... he was sitting at the kitchen table, and it was like you were walking on Mt. Sinai and there's Moses just sitting there," Luter said.

"You know, it was just incredible. [He had] just beautiful white hair and just sitting there with family members and friends around. It was just really a surreal moment for me."

Graham remembered meeting Luter during the March 2006 Celebration of Hope crusade in New Orleans.

"Bro. Wilton said, 'Dr. Graham, I have the president of the Southern Baptist Convention,' and Dr. Graham just said, 'Oh yeah, I know Fred.' He was very personable," Luter said. "I sat down next to him and he congratulated me on being elected as president of the Southern Baptist Convention and of course, from that point on, I just... raved about him and what a fan I've been of his for years."

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Sunday School: Back to the future

Churches across the Mississippi Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention are beginning the new church year, as people settle into the late summer routine of schools starting up and (hooray!) football season kicking off.

New study curricula have been ordered. The church work days to prepare the buildings and grounds are over. There are blooming flowers in the beds and fresh paint everywhere. Each church is putting its best foot forward to welcome both members and visitors back to the fold. There have been much prayer and praise lifted up to our Heavenly Father.

Let's not forget to note how important is Sunday School when making our getting-back-to-normal plans for the fall. Every Baptist in our state should be attending Sunday School this fall.

There are many reasons for doing so, not the least of which would be to honor the Mississippi Baptist who is widely recognized as the father of the modern Sunday School movement — even by other denominations.

A Texan by birth, Arthur Flake moved to Mississippi and became a successful businessman in the Winona area. He attended First Church, Winona, and it was there in his role as Sunday School director that the Lord began to impress upon him the importance of Sunday School. His local work toward creating effective Sunday Schools led him to give up his business career and join the Baptist Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville in 1909. He was 47 years old.

Flake became director of the Board's Sunday School Department in 1920, and there devised his now-famous Flake's Formula in which he listed five laws of Sunday School growth and called on the churches of the convention to build churches by building effective Sunday Schools. Flake's Formula, contained in his 1922 book, *Building a Standard Sunday School*, is simple.

Know the possibilities. What is a church capable of accomplishing with the Lord Jesus

Christ at the head? Make an effort to understand the makeup of the church's community and how best to reach the people in that community.

Expand the organization. Don't be caught by surprise when the Sunday School effort demands more people and resources. Always have a plan for the future that can be implemented immediately.

Provide the space. Have plenty of it (See "Expand the organization," above). Use it efficiently. Where best to place the Sunday School class for older members who can't climb steps to the second floor? Where can pre-school children be accommodated comfortably and securely?

Train the leaders. God will raise up quality Sunday School leaders, but they could still use training on the church's vision and goals, teaching methods, and the curriculum.

Go after the people. Most people, even in the Bible Belt, are not going to automatically show up at church and ask to be included in the Sunday School program. Allow Sunday School to be a major part of outreach (and inreach), and let people know a warm, caring, and prepared Sunday School class will be waiting for them each week.

Arthur Flake's formula is as relevant today as when it was published in 1922. In the Southern Baptist Convention alone, it is credited with increasing Sunday School attendance from one million to six million.

Churches of all denominations have successfully adopted and adapted Flake's Formula through the years. Sunday School has truly become the backbone of most of these churches and the gateway to greater ministry involvement within the church body. It's difficult to find a church with a thriving Sunday School program that is not thriving in almost every other area of the church's life.

Sunday School is an important part of our vision to help bring Mississippi and the world to Jesus. Make sure your church is a part of that vision. Make sure you're a part of it, too.



FLAKE

What did Jesus say about same sex marriage?

Today it is popular among those promoting same sex marriage to say that Jesus never addressed the issue, that He was silent on the subject. The question I want to raise is, "Is this assertion correct?" Is it indeed the fact that Jesus never addresses the issue of same sex marriage?

First, what did Jesus say about sex? Jesus believed that sex is a good gift from a great God. He also believed that sex is a good gift to be enjoyed within a monogamous, heterosexual covenant of marriage.

On this He is crystal clear. In Mark 7 Jesus addresses the fact that all sin is ultimately an issue of the heart. Jesus was never after behavioral modification. Jesus was always after heart transformation. Change the heart and you truly change the person.

Thus when He lists a catalog of sins in Mark 7:21-22, He makes it clear that all of these sins are ultimately matters of the heart. It is the idols of the heart that Jesus is out to eradicate. Among those sins of the heart that often give way to sinful actions He would include both sexual immorality and adultery (Mark 7:21). The phrase "sexual immorality," in a biblical context, would speak of any sexual behavior outside the covenant of marriage between a man and woman.

Therefore, Jesus viewed premarital sex, adultery, and homosexual behavior as sinful, and He knew that the cure for each is a transformation of the heart made possible by the good news of the Gospel. The Gospel changes us so that now we are enabled to do not what we want, but what God wants. Here we find real freedom and joy.

Second, what about the issue of marriage? Is it truly the case that Jesus never spoke to the issue in terms of gender? The answer is a simple no. He gives His perspective on this when He addresses the issue in Matthew 19:4-6. There, speaking to the institution of marriage, Jesus is clear when He says, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife,



Guest opinion
with Danny Akin

and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

That Jesus was committed to heterosexual marriage could not be more evident. A man is to leave his parents and be joined to a woman who becomes his wife. This is heterosexual marriage. That He also was committed to the permanence and fidelity of marriage is clear as well.

How might we sum up the issue? First, Jesus came to deliver all people from all sin. Such sin, He was convinced, originated in and was ultimately a matter of the heart. Second, Jesus made it clear that sex is a good gift from a great God, and this good gift is to be enjoyed within heterosexual covenantal marriage.

It is simply undeniable that Jesus assumed heterosexual marriage as God's design and plan.

When I came to fully trust Jesus as my Lord and Savior at the age of 20, I determined that I wanted to think like Jesus and live like Jesus for the rest of my life. That means I will affirm covenantal heterosexual marriage. It also means loving each and every person regardless of their lifestyle choices.

It means, as His representative, proclaiming His Gospel and extending the transforming grace of the Gospel to others that takes us where we are, but wonderfully and amazingly, does not leave us there. That is a hope and a promise that followers of Jesus gladly extend to everyone, because we have been recipients of that same amazing grace.

Akin is president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

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Research shows church goers timid about sharing their faith

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — When it comes to discipleship, those who regularly attend church struggle with sharing Christ with non-Christians, according to recent study of church going American Protestants.

The study conducted by LifeWay Research found that 80% of those who attend church one or more times a month believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith, but 61% have not told another person about how to become a Christian in the previous six months.

These distressing results came from an extensive discipleship research project focused on measuring spiritual maturity in individuals. Overall, LifeWay Research found eight biblical attributes consistently evident in the lives of maturing believers. Of those eight, "Sharing Christ" has the lowest average score among Protestant church attendees.

Three-quarters of churchgoers say they feel comfortable in their ability to effectively communicate the Gospel, while 12% say they don't feel comfortable telling others about their faith.

Despite a vast majority believing it's their duty to share their faith and having the confidence to do so, 25% say they have shared their faith once or twice over the previous six months, and 14% have shared three or more times during that stretch.

The survey also asked how many times they have personally, "invited an unchurched per-

son to attend a church service or some other program at your church?" Nearly half (48%) of church attendees responded, "zero." Thirty-three percent of people say they've personally invited someone one or two times, and 19% say they've done so on three or more occasions in the last six months.

"Many times we've been told new Christians are most active in sharing their faith," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "In reality people who have been a Christian longer have higher responses for Sharing Christ than newer Christians. While new Christians may find it natural to share their new experience, mature Christians do it intentionally."

According to Stetzer, "praying more frequently for the status of people who are not professing Christians is the best indicator of more spiritual maturity in the entire sharing Christ factor."

In the study, 21% of churchgoers say that outside of church worship services they pray every day for people they know who are not professing Christians. Twenty-six percent say they pray a few times a week. One-fifth (20%) say they rarely or never pray for the spiritual status of others.

"If you are going to be intentional about sharing your faith, praying for others is a great way to start," Stetzer said. "We often acknowledge the importance of prayer in people coming to faith in Christ, but we also found it has an impact on the person praying."

These findings are part of the largest discipleship study of its kind. Results from each of the eight attributes of spiritual maturity will continue to be released over the coming months.

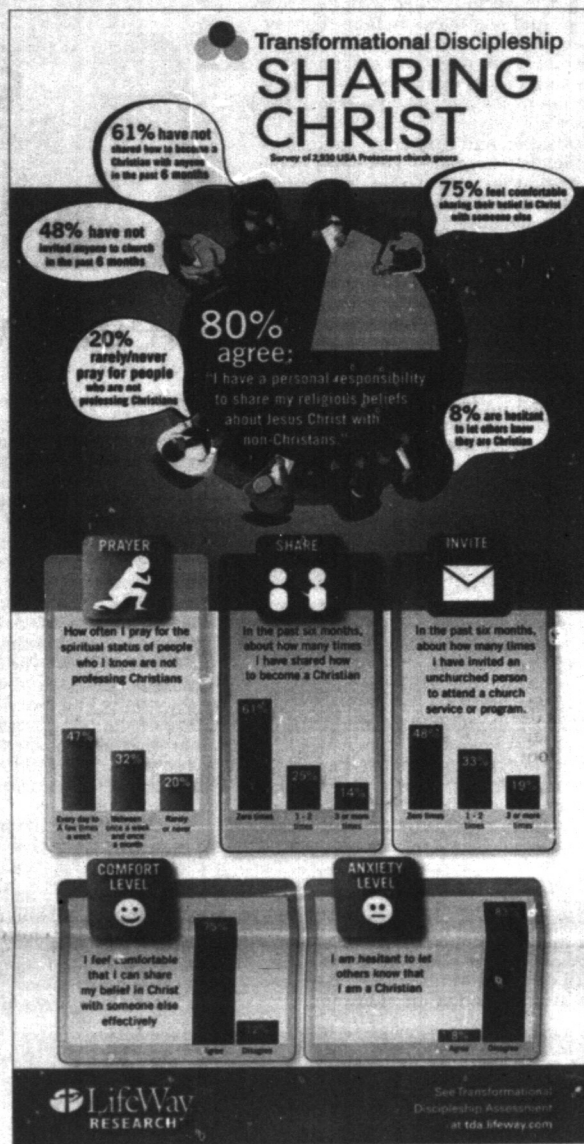
The survey of 2,930 American adults who attend a Protestant church once a month or more was conducted October 14-22, 2011. A demographically balanced online panel was used for the interviewing.

To help pastors, churches and individuals measure spiritual development, LifeWay Research used the study's data to develop a questionnaire for believers, called the Transformational Discipleship Assessment (TDA). This online evaluation delivers both individual and group reports on spiritual maturity using the eight factors of biblical discipleship.

The TDA also provides helpful and practical suggestions on appropriate next steps for spiritual development.

"The Transformational Discipleship Assessment not only captures the literal action of verbally sharing one's faith, but also measures how ready and willing a person is to do so," Stetzer said. "While most believers accept personal responsibility to share their belief in Jesus Christ with non-Christians, far fewer are seeking these opportunities."

To learn more about the transformational discipleship research visit LifeWayResearch.com. The TDA is available at <http://tda.lifeway.com>.



Saudis imprison, deport Christians as woman announces conversion

WASHINGTON (BP) — Saudi Arabia has deported the last of 35 Ethiopian Christians who were arrested during a December prayer meeting and imprisoned during the ensuing months. Meanwhile, a 28-year-old female reportedly has become the first Saudi woman to announce publicly by video she has converted from Islam to Christianity.

The now-deported Ethiopian Christians, 29 women and six men, were praying Dec. 15 in the city of Jeddah when Saudi police raided the private home in which they were meeting. On Aug. 1, the Saudis completed deportation of the Ethiopians, according to International Christian Concern (ICC).

Some of the Ethiopians had lived in Saudi Arabia for as many as 16 years prior to their arrests.

Saudi officials assaulted, harassed, and sought to coerce the Christians to convert to Islam while in prison, ICC reported. They strip-searched the women, including searches of their body cavities, and physically abused the men, some of

the Ethiopians told ICC by phone during their imprisonment.

A Muslim preacher came to the prison at authorities' request in February in an effort to persuade the Christians to leave their faith, according to ICC.

"The Muslim preacher vilified Christianity, denigrated the Bible, and told us that Islam is the only true religion," a female prisoner told ICC by phone. "The preacher told us to convert to Islam. When the preacher asked us, we didn't deny... our Christian faith."

Saudi Arabia, which bars all public expressions of religious belief other than an extremely strict interpretation of Islam referred to as Wahhabism, is one of the world's worst violators of religious liberty.

The U.S. State Department has designated the Middle East state as a "country of particular concern," a designation reserved for governments that are particularly severe in violating religious freedom.

The Saudi government, which prohibits all non-Muslim houses of worship, has said since 2006 it permits worship held

privately in house churches, but its actions regarding the Ethiopian Christians appear to be part of mounting evidence of its assertion is false.

"Saudi Arabian officials clearly demonstrated their utter disregard for religious freedom by arresting, mistreating and deporting the Christians for holding a prayer meeting," said Jonathan Racho, ICC's regional manager for Africa, in an Aug. 3 written statement.

The Saudis deceive the international community by pretending to promote tolerance among followers of different religious beliefs; however, in reality they don't tolerate any other religion besides Wahhabi Islam. The international community must pressure Saudi Arabia to respect religious freedom."

In February, the bipartisan U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom urged the Ethiopians' release, but its plea failed to move the Saudis to free the Christians.

The newly converted Saudi woman appeared in an online video in her Hijab,

or head covering and veil, to confess her faith in Christ, Mohabat News reported Aug. 5.

In the short video, the 28-year-old introduced herself as "Maryam" and said, "I have quit the darkness of Wahhabi Islam and entered the light of Christianity. I dreamt that I needed to do this. Jesus Christ came to visit me in my dream and gave me the name of Maryam (Arabic pronunciation of Mary)."

"The morality police's treatment caused me to not take fasting and prayer seriously and to eventually convert to Christianity," she said, according to Mohabat News. Saudi's "morality police" are responsible for enforcing Wahhabism. Mohabat News describes itself as the news agency for Iranian Christians.

The video's online posting angered Saudi government and religious officials, who urged steps be taken to halt Christian evangelism in the country, the report said. Maryam wore her Hijab to conceal her identity and protect her life, she said in the video.

The world is filled with negatives and positives. In fact, the way God formed the world at creation He put negatives and positives as a part of its operation. It is interesting to see magnetic powers at work because magnets have pull which is a positive, and they can even push which is a negative. You and I live in a world that is to a great degree driven and powered by batteries all of which have a negative and positive charge. Recently, I was listening to a psychologist as he talked about negative influences and positive influences in our lives. He made the statement that for every negative comment someone receives it takes approximately 10 positive comments to overcome the negative statement. Now I am fairly sure that there have been numerous studies made supporting that theory. On the other hand I do not know if it is just a ten to one ratio, because a lot of variables enter into that depending on what was said or done, who it was that said or did something, and the very nature of the person who heard the negative comment or responded to the negative action.

I have known of some things that have happened in people's lives that ten thousand positive comments would not overcome. By the same token, I am sure there are negative comments that have been made and they had no affect at all on the hearer. But as a rule and in balance, negative things are hard to overcome. The writer of Proverbs deals with this in a way that most of us can understand as he talks about hurtful words that bring wounds, comments that put people down, and actions that seek to inflict pain. I suppose all of us have been the source of negative comments toward someone at one time or another. And most of us have been a positive force when we are in tune with God and wanting to help others around us. Let me share some



Negatives and Positives

thoughts about negatives and positives that I hope will be helpful to us.

My first observation is that hurtful things, whether words or deeds, seem to be easier to think of than positive things. It is amazing that we can think of a hurtful, negative response in a nano second while two days later we think of a good and positive thing that we could have said. It appears as though two things contribute to each of us having that bent to our thinking. We live in a world infected with the curse of sin all around us, and each of us have within us personally and individually the nature of sin. That is not to say that the folks around us do not influence us, but even if they did not we would figure out ways to hurt people and be negative on our own.

My second observation is that some times negative things can not ever be taken away. They change us, shape us, and though we may try to overcome them and even succeed to some degree we are still scarred by them and sometimes haunted by them. I recall as a young man when I surrendered to preach a man that I knew and admired told an-

other person that he did not believe I would ever be able to preach. I knew that the Lord saved me, and I knew that He had called me to preach. Now I have preached tens of thousands of sermons, but still on occasion I can hear the words he told that person that I would never make a preacher.

Strange isn't it how a negative and hurtful putdown can get lodged in your brain. He had never heard me preach a sermon because I had never preached one, but he made an evaluation and I have kept it with me. At the time it was of great concern to me because I wondered what if he was right. Frankly, there have been some times after I have preached a sermon that I thought maybe he was right, but I knew that he wasn't. In over 40 years of preaching I have had dozens of people to comment in positive, encouraging, and affirming ways of how a message has blessed someone. But honestly most of those comments and the people who made them I didn't retain, but the words of the negative guy stuck.

So many families have been hurt by the negative word. The negative things have severed friendships and

Christian relationships have been broken by negative assessments. Many a parent has done irrefutable damage to the development of a child because of the negative comment or the hurtful action imposed on them. They never seem to be able to recover.

My third observation is that people who make the greatest difference in the Kingdom of God are people who seem to be dispensers of positive things. Just walk through the Scriptures, and they will almost jump off the page. They are everywhere — Jesus, Paul, Moses, Job, or Esther. They make an eternal difference.

The final observation that I would share with you is that each of us should seek to surround ourselves with people who are for the most part a balance of positive and negative when it is most needed. If you surround yourself with negative folks, they will crush you, diminish your spirit, and rob your joy. Amazingly, there are some people who are so positive that they can even tell you negative things in a positive way. On the other hand there are some people who are so negative that they can tell you positive things in a negative way.

You may say you don't know any positive people. Well, start with the Lord and let our great God, the Good Shepherd, and the wonderful Great Physician touch your life, help you, heal you, deal with your needs, and affirm your gifts. From that relationship let every other relationship develop. You will surround yourself with those folks who are like the One you want to emulate all the time. They are Jesus people — God's uplifting, faithful, and encouraging servants. Let them bless you, and then go and do like wise to others.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

VFK AUR HNMK OVCK LFAN TVCF, BUP

VMA AUNL BMNAU? VFK BUP CO AUP

TNLFARFVFTR SVHHRF?

ERFROCO SNLM: OCZ

Clue: Clue: F = N

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Isaiah Five: Sixteen

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and

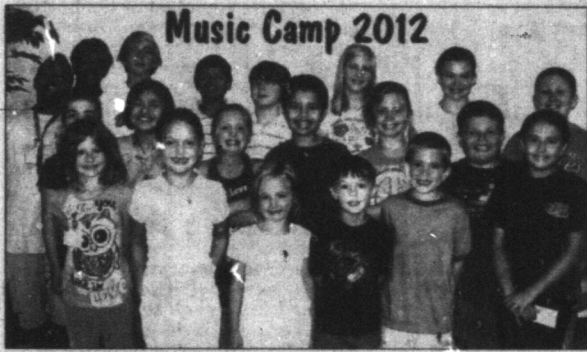
white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either e-mail, CD or DVD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Just for the Record



Music Camp 2012

SHERMAN CHURCH, LEE ASSOCIATION, held a music camp July 9 -11. Jody Blake, music director; Greg Thomas, pastor.



FIRST CHURCH, MCLAURIN, held Mission Friends/RA/ GA recognition day July 15. Stan Davis, BSU director, Pearl River Community College was the guest speaker.



CROSSPOINT CHURCH, HATTIESBURG, hosted a sportsman's wild game banquet, presenting the proceeds of \$2500 to the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village. Shown are Wes Register, Randy Cotton, Travis Luck, and Josh Jones.

MAGNOLIA CHURCH, LAUREL, recognizes Bible drillers Gail James (leader), Joshua Pugh, Abigail Garick, and Trevor Aplin.



THE YOUTH FROM SPRING HILL CHURCH, WATERFORD, shown, recently attended MBYM camp at lake Lajoie. Jessie Russom, youth leader; John Parker, pastor.



ROXIE CHURCH, ROXIE, licensed Justin D'Avy to the gospel ministry in March. Shown are D'Avy and Keith Whitehead.

CLEARY CHURCH, FLORENCE, recognizes its youth Bible drillers.



FIRST CHURCH, VICKSBURG, recognized Judy Hardy, financial secretary and administrative assistant, for 20 years of service. Shown are Larry Pharr, Hardy, and pastor Matt Buckles.



FIRST CHURCH, MYRICK, ordained Clint "Cricket" Taylor as deacon July 8. Shown are Taylor (center), Rory Dill, pastor T. J. Stroo, and deacons from First Church and Loop Road Church, Richton.

Vacation Bible School



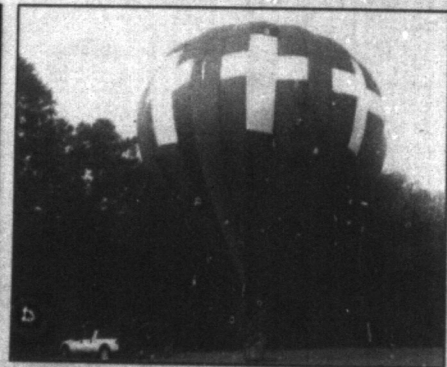
HEBRON CHURCH, SMITHDALE: June 4 - 6.



BLUFF SPRINGS CHURCH, MAGNOLIA: June 24 - 28; total enrollment, 54.



PLEASANT HILL CHURCH, TIPPAAH COUNTY: July 15 - 20.



FIRST CHURCH, RIDGELAND: July 23 - 27; shown is a hot-air balloon used during registration.



BELDEN CHURCH, BELDEN: Commencement, July 14, with the children performing a musical written and compiled by minister of music Kelly McGinnis. Susan Bauer, VBS director; Teresa Bridges, Director of Children's Ministry; Jim Holcomb, senior pastor.



DOCKERY CHURCH, CLEVELAND: Block party kickoff, July 7, led by team from Sardis Church, Sardis, Ala.; twelve professions of faith during the week of July 9 - 12. J.B. Hayes, pastor.



ETHEL CHURCH, ETHEL: July 9 - 13; average attendance, 123 children; six decisions for Christ.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name. (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Cameron to lead conference at Crossgates, Brandon

Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Kirk Cameron, star of the formerly top-rated television show, *Growing Pains*, and the blockbuster Christian movie *Fireproof* produced by Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., will be the featured speaker August 18 at Feed Your Faith's national Love Worth Fighting For conference at Crossgates Church, Brandon.

The conference, part of a national tour, is an event designed to strengthen and encourage all relationships, including marriages. Musical guest will be Warren Barfield, who wrote the song, *Love Is Not A Fight*, which was featured in *Fireproof*.

The evening conference session has sold out, but at The Baptist Record's printing deadline a second session had been scheduled and tickets were still available.

The Baptist Record had the opportunity to interview Cameron, who will turn 42 in October and has been married to fellow *Growing Pains* cast member Chelsea Noble for 21 years. They have six children, four of whom are adopted.

BAPTIST RECORD: Tell us a little about the Love Worth Fighting For event.

CAMERON: Sure. The event began a few years ago after the movie, *Fireproof*, was released. It created a firestorm in marriages and in homes. People watching that movie were saying, man, that reminds me so much of what happens in our house, and I want what happened in that movie to happen to us. So we turned *Fireproof* into a live four-hour experience and are taking it to churches around the country. It's a combination of honesty, humor, great music, times to pray and sing, and to get deep biblical insight on the subject of marriage. It's a great night to go out and date your husband or wife.

BAPTIST RECORD: Tell us about the genesis of this idea.

CAMERON: Well, marriage was God's idea, but Feed Your Faith is a ministry that has been putting on events like this to build up Christians. So we started about three years ago with about 9,000 people one weekend. We've been in about 80 different cities in the last three years.

BAPTIST RECORD: Is there any one specific goal with which you want participants to leave?

CAMERON: We want people to leave saying, "Man, I



CAMERON

want to fire it up again with my wife or husband. I want a great marriage. I want that same experience that forced me to say 'do' at the front of the church. We want people to know that their marriage is worth fighting for.

BAPTIST RECORD: As Christians, we are swimming against the tides of culture these days. In your own life, how do you manage to stand firm?

CAMERON: If you don't know who you are and whose you are, you don't have a chance. You have to know you

belong to the Lord. If you don't, you're going to be tossed to and fro. You'll be tossed around by the culture and swept downstream with all the dead fish, but if you've been born again by the spirit of God, you've been brought to life and you'll be swimming upstream against all the dead fish. You'll make it all the way up to where you need to be. You have to read God's word every day. Second, choose your friends wisely. Surround yourself with people who will build you up and not tear you down.

BAPTIST RECORD: What about accountability? Is it helpful to have friends who will provide that?

CAMERON: We talk a lot about that, but you know what? The fear of the Lord is my accountability. Bottom line — if you're going to lie to your spouse, you can lie to your accountability partner, too. Scripture teaches that it is appointed to a man once to die and then comes the judgment, so if you're going to be giving an account of your life to the One who made you, well, there's your accountability right there.

BAPTIST RECORD: How do we as Christians go about communicating that we are totally behind the biblical concept of marriage without presenting

ourselves as anti-something else? How can we as believers stand firm on our convictions while at the same time show Christ's compassion?

CAMERON: There was an Old Testament priest named Eli who had wicked sons. He was a terrible priest. His problem was that he didn't address and identify sin. He was a nice guy and wanted people to like him, but he wouldn't call sin out, and that led to a legacy of judgment and destruction for his family and his people.

The better priest was Jesus Christ. He was different. He loved people. He loved His enemies, but He called sin what God called it, and He called people to repentance so they could experience life and healing. People could experience forgiveness instead of death and judgment, so what we need to do is follow in the footsteps of Jesus — love people, but call sin what God calls it. Then we can offer people healing through repentance and faith.

For more information on Cameron's ministry, visit www.kirkcameron.com. For information on the Love Worth Fighting For event and available tickets, visit <http://www.feedyourfaith.org/event/love-worth-fighting-for-brandon-mooring/>.

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Ronnie & Beverly Cottingham

will be leading the sessions *Financial Infidelity* and *Red Hot Monogamy — Making Your Marriage Sizzle*. They have been at the helm of JUS' JESUS MINISTRIES, INC. for over 30 years and have been leading marriage enrichment conferences for over 20 years. They have been married for 41 years and have two married daughters and six granddaughters. For more information about the Cottingham's ministry visit their website at www.rombecottingham.com.



Wayne & Tina Hudson

will be leading the sessions *Spiritual Intimacy* and *Connecting With Your Mate — Communication Is the Key*. Wayne will also be speaking for the worship celebrations on Friday and Saturday. Wayne and Tina have a full time preaching/teaching organization entitled COMPLETE-IN-CHRIST MINISTRIES. They have been married 35 years, have one son, two daughters, and three grandchildren. They have led marriage enrichment conferences in Mississippi, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, and California. Their website is www.complete-in-christ.com.

Just for the Record

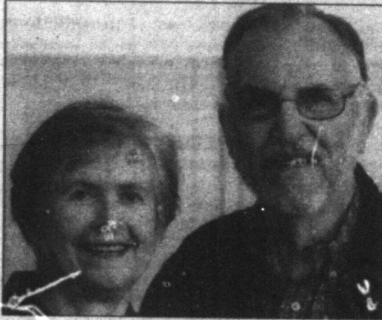


RAYMOND ROAD CHURCH, JACKSON, held a parent-child dedication Aug. 5.

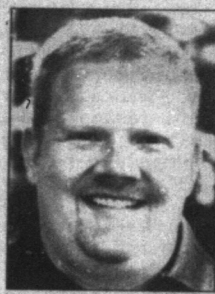
In other Church News:

► **Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle**, is hosting a Faith in Action Sunday Sept. 2, beginning at 8:30 a.m. The church members will deliver home-cooked meals to shut-ins and confined, pick up trash along the road, pass out light bulbs and smoke detectors, doing small repairs to needy families homes, cutting grass, and doing odd jobs at Moselle Elementary School.

Staff Changes



Roger and Martha Anne Alford recently retired as bivocational music ministers. They have served in **SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCHES** in Mississippi and Florida for a combined total of 112 years and now reside in Bolton.



METCALF



TANKERSLEY

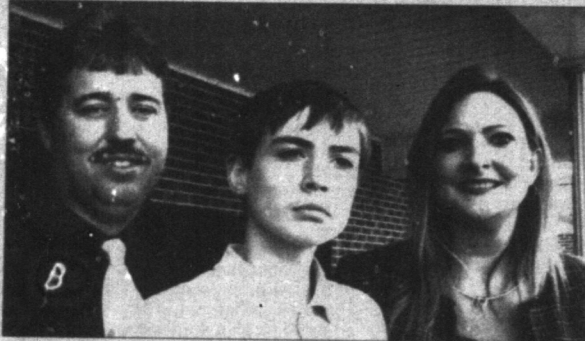


UPCHURCH

FIRST CHURCH, RIDGELAND, has called three new staff members. Mark Metcalf has come as the community impact minister; Wes Tankersley has come as the student minister; and Debbie Upchurch has come as the children's minister.

In other Staff News:

► Chase Herrington has been called as youth minister at **New Home Church, Smith County**. Herrington is studying history and religion at William Carey University. He is engaged to Lydia Nix and the couple plans to marry in April, 2013. He plans to attend Southeastern Seminary after completing college.



CORINTH CHURCH, HEIDELBERG, has called Jamie Matthews as pastor. He comes with his wife Kristi and son Zach.

NEW HENLEYFIELD CHURCH, PEARL RIVER COUNTY, has called Scott Thomas as pastor. He comes after three years of service in the Jackson Metro area. He is shown with his wife Carley.



Music leadership courses now open for enrollment

JACKSON, MS. (Special) — The month of August begins the fifth of eight courses offered at seven locations in Mississippi sponsored by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, in cooperation with the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

The fifth course, Songs and Hymns for Worship, will meet once a week for two hours for eight consecutive weeks at the following locations and times. Exceptions should be noted:

■ **First Church, Cleveland**, beginning August 21 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Alan Berry, teacher. (662) 843-2701.

■ **Northeast Church, Meridian**, began August 13 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Buddy McElroy, teacher. 601-938-8668.

■ **Easthaven Church, Brookhaven**, Aug. 18 and 25 (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., with lunch break). Mark Hamilton, teacher. (601) 835-6607.

■ **First Church, Starkville**, began Aug. 11 and 25 (9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., with lunch break). Tom Jenkins, teacher. (662) 323-5633.

■ **First Church, Booneville**, beginning August 21 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). LuAnne Ford, teacher. (662) 728-6272.

■ **Broadmoor Church, Madison**, beginning August 20 (6:00-8:00 p.m.). Jimmy McCaleb, teacher. (601) 924-1233.

■ **Handsboro Church, Gulfport**, began August 14 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Louis White, teacher, (228)

896-3796.

The eight courses are Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Songs and Hymns for Worship; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Church Music Resources; and Class Voice.

The courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches. In most locations the eight courses meet two hours per week with each course being eight weeks in length. Saturday locations may vary. The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a certificate from the Providence Learning Center of New Orleans Seminary.

There is a one-time enrollment fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$100.00. A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church.

For more information, contact the teachers listed by location above or Slater Murphy, Director of Church Music, Mississippi Baptist Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3276 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 276. E-mail: smurphy@mbcb.org.

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EASTWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH OF INDIANOLA, MS IS IN SEARCH OF A FULL-TIME SENIOR PASTOR. Please send resumes to the church at P.O. Box 466, Indianola, MS 38751, Attn: Search Committee or by e-mail to williamsharp@bellsouth.net.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SUMMIT, MS SEEKS A PART TIME PRESCHOOL MINISTRY DIRECTOR to oversee the Preschool Ministry of the church in coordination with the children's minister. Experience leading children is required, and a college degree is preferred. Please send resumes to Dean Pearce at dean@fbcsummit.org.

HIGHPOINT BAPTIST CHURCH, RAYMOND, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTER TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH. This is a small church with a loving heart and great potential. Please send resumes to jerryflier@gmail.com, or call (601) 259-2248; or mail to 4543 Learned Rd., Raymond, MS 39154.

EAST PLEASANT GROVE, QUITMAN IS SEEKING A BIVOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/YOUTH. Send resumes to 4126 CR 672 Quitman, MS 39355, attention Pastor, or e-mail to Pastor Josh Meadows @ j.meadows@rocketmail.com.

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH OF LIBERTY, MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resumes to: PO Box 73, Liberty, MS 39645 or email to libertybc@libertybaptistchurch.biz.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH VARDAMAN OF VARDAMAN, MS IS SEEKING A MUSIC MINISTER. Please send resume to: First Baptist Church Vardaman P.O. Box 173 Vardaman, MS 38878 or e-mail: fbcv@tds.net.

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH OF HOLLY SPRINGS, MS IN SEARCH OF A BIVOCATIONAL PASTOR. If interested, please e-mail your resume to kristal@yahoo.com.

UNION HALL BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR. Resumes may be mailed to the church at: 1242 Nola Road N. E., Brookhaven, MS 39601 Attention: Youth Director Search Committee.

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Revivals & Homecomings

► **Grace United Church, Decatur:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Johnny Collins, speaker; Gary Thorne, music; Mark McDonald, pastor.

► **Sand Hill Church, Ellisville:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., morning and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m. with Wednesday youth service; Sam Husser, speaker.

► **Country Woods Church, Byram:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 6:30 p.m.; Bob Self, speaker; Jim Farrish and Country Woods worship team, music.

► **Bethany Church, Meridian:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 23, 7 p.m.; Steve Winstead, Danny Lanier, and Kara Blackard, speakers; Willis Family Singers, music; Marvin Cooper, pastor.

► **Doty Springs Church, McCool:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Ralph Hunt, John Ballard, and Steve Jackson, speakers.

► **Short Creek Church, Iuka:** Homecoming and Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Rich Ables and Sonny Bradshaw, speakers.

► **First Church, Laurel:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., 8:30, 10:30 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., noon (lunch provided) and 6 p.m.; Jim Putral, speaker; Slater Murphy, music.

► **Sunrise Church, Leake County:** Revival, Aug. 19 - 22; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and 7 p.m. nightly; Mark Mayo, speaker; Don Wallace, music.

College News

Nicholas "Nicky" Holland of Meridian was named Mr. **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY** 2012. Mr. WCU is voted on by the student body as the student who best represents the values of the university. Nicholas, the son of Darryl and Sandra Holland, graduated from Carey in May with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry, and recently accepted a position as an admissions counselor at WCU. He was president of Carey Scholars, a justice for the Student Government Association (SGA), a member of Alpha Chi National College Honor Society, and named Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges. Named Miss WCU was Chelsea Maywalt of Carriere.



Barbara Childers McMillin, center, the new president of **BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE**, is shown meeting with David Shankle, left, chairman of the business department, and Sharon Enzor, vice-president for academic affairs, on her first morning in office. She grew up 15 miles north of Blue Mountain in Falkner, and came to BMC after 20 years at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., where most recently she was Associate Provost and Dean of Instruction. She is an alumna of Northeast Mississippi Community College, Union University and the University of Mississippi. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Union, McMillin earned both her M.A. and D.A. in English at Ole Miss. As a graduate student, she was a teaching assistant at Ole Miss and an English Instructor at BMC in the summers of 1985 and 1987. McMillin was a member of the NEMCC English faculty for five years before joining the Union faculty in the fall of 1992. She was named Union's Faculty of the Year in 1999. She succeeds Bettye Rogers Coward, who recently retired after 11 years as BMC's president.

In other College News:

► **Mississippi College** will host Dennis Swanburg Aug. 18, 3 p.m., at First Church, Clinton. Swanburg, also known as America's Minister of Encouragement, will spin stories, do funny impersonations, and trigger loads of laughs as he addresses MC students and parents.

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Olive Baptist Church
Pensacola, Florida

Dr. Paige Patterson
President of Southwestern Baptist
Theological Seminary
Fort Worth, Texas

Dr. Kenneth Whitten
Idolwild Baptist Church
Tampa, Florida

Dr. Robert Smith
Professor of Divinity at
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Schedule

Aug. 19	10:15 p.m.	John Sullivan
	6:00 p.m.	Paige Patterson
Aug. 20	12:00 p.m.	John Sullivan
	6:30 p.m.	Kenneth Whitten
Aug. 21	12:00 p.m.	John Sullivan
	6:30 p.m.	Robert Smith

Midday Services

12:00 - 1:00 PM

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MSBA is an independent and sovereign association in itself, and respects the autonomy of the local congregation. We conform to the doctrine, policy and practice as expressed in the current Baptist Faith and Message.

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

JUNE 2012

MEMORIALS

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Cathin Carithers
Ms. Angie H. Freeman
Richard Chesten
Ms. Julie H. Halfacre
Cecil Clark
Mrs. Clara Faye Keith
Mrs. Ruth Cox
Ruth SSC, Juniper Grove BC
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Loftin
Mr. & Mrs. Harold Lowery
Daniel & Dianne Smith
Mr. Keith Stringer
Lozell Craft
Mrs. Ruby R. Shelton
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Mrs. Hazel Garrett
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Ms. Mackie W. Dettor
Marguerite Dettor
Ms. Mackie W. Dettor
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Mr. & Mrs. Darry Crowell & Lindsey
Jerry Doherty
Bud & Kim Doherty
Mary Frances Druey
Ms. Mary Lou Blair & Family
Eddie V. Dunnam
Christine Moore Family
Warren Easley
Mrs. Sheila Huffman
Dr. George H. Edmonson Jr.
Jennings & Betty Sue Dixon
Mr. & Mrs. Perry Atherton
Robert Ellard
McCool BC
Mr. David Ellington
Tues. Morn. Ladies Bible

Study
Carrollton BC
Tommy & Barbara Rayburn
Mrs. Jonny L. Kealhofer
Emon Estes
Ad III Lad/Men's SSC,
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Mr. & Mrs. Willie H. Ratliff
Frank Sudduth
Carol & Jim Brents
Mrs. Sue Sullivan
Luther & Edith Lindsey

Mrs. Ruby Walters Sumrall
Clarence & Jean Sims
Gary Lee Terrell
Gleaners SSC, Pilgrims Rest BC
Mitch Terrell
Mr. & Mrs. John F. Miller Jr.
Mrs. Essie Pearl Tindall
Mrs. Carolyn Hisaw
Zula Towery
Ms. Marie S. Graham
Juanita Vanderlip
Mr. & Mrs. Roy A. Roberts
Mrs. Hazel Vandevender
Ron & Cathy Hagen
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Mrs. Lena Walker
Mr. & Mrs. J. V. Parker
Janice Wallace
Mr. & Mrs. Earl Sisco
Howard A. Webb Sr.
Mr. & Mrs. R. James Young
Mr. David Ingram
Rev. O. W. Wheeler
Mrs. Mackie W. Dettor
Robbie L. Wheeler
Ms. Mackie W. Dettor
Paul Williams
Ms. Dorothy J. Box
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Rev. Marion Wilson
Mr. & Mrs. Willie Ratliff
Laura Lucille Wolfe
Mrs. Ruby R. Shelton
Kathryn Wood
Ms. Lois Raiford
Stephen Wray
Mrs. Sue Germany & Family
Mrs. Mary Louise Wright
Bobby & Ann Hannaford
Mrs. Hazel Wylie
Tommy Joe Wylie
Mrs. Jane Wylie
Tommy Joe Wylie
Rev. Jim Yates
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E.

Champion
Mr. Roy Zepponi
Carol & Jim Brents

JULY 2012

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Men of Calvary BC
Calvary BC, Oxford
Jeff Adams
Turkey Creek BC
Sonny Avant
Turkey Creek BC
Mr. & Mrs. Walter Cole
Mrs. Lona M. Southerland
Jim & Bobbie (Robinson) Farmer
Jim & Betty Sledge
Zetta Grace Foshee
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis L. McPhail
Mrs. Dorothy Gilbert
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Mrs. Bea Greer
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Glyn Hester
Mrs. Johnnie Mae Black
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Johnny & Sharon Weaver
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Patricia and Gerald Hasselman
Mrs. Paul (Sissy) Moak Sr.
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Mrs. Lona M. Southerland
Joyce Smith
Ladies SSC, Springdale BC
Rev. & Mrs. Walt Tessier
William & Senita Webb
Mrs. Jane Toler
Mrs. Rene W. Baird
Charles Warren
Mr. Owen R. Warren

2012 Back to School Needs

School days are just around the corner and The Baptist Children's Village is busy preparing just like any family would. We are well stocked with basic school needs like crayons, glue, notebooks, etc., but we do have items we need your help with this school year.

2012 School Needs:

- Large and X-Large Backpacks (All colors, clear & mesh)
- Mechanical Pencils & Refills
- Highlighters (all colors)
- 3 inch 3-ring binders
- 3x5 & 4x6 index cards with lines
- Poster board (all colors)
- Foam Core Board (all colors)
- Science Fair Boards

For more information, contact The Baptist Children's Village at 601-922-2242 or visit our website at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

Expressing Love • Ruth 1:11-13a, 15-18; 2:2-3, 11-12

The final unit and lessons of this quarter emphasize commitment in relationships with others and with the Lord. The lessons are taken from the book of Ruth. We begin with Ruth's commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi, expressed through loving words and actions.

1. Sacrificial Expression of Love (Ruth 1:11-13a)

Naomi had a rough life. She and her husband were forced from their home in Bethlehem by a relentless famine. Taking their two sons, they journeyed east to Moab. Her husband died; her sons grew up and married, but then they died too. Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem, but she knew her Moabite daughter-in-laws would do better to remain in Moab and remarry. Initially, both daughter-in-laws decided to go to Bethlehem with Naomi. However, Naomi expressed love for her daughters-in-law by ignoring her own needs and trying to persuade them to remain in Moab. In ancient times, a woman's well being was tied to her father or husband. Naomi expressed to them her inability to raise up new husbands for them (1:11-13a). She put the needs of her daughters-in-law ahead of her own needs. Naomi's actions stand in stark contrast to the selfishness of the period of Judges when everyone did as they saw fit.

2. Declaration of Commitment (Ruth 1:15-17)

Orpah, one daughter-in-law, heeded Naomi's advice and headed home. Naomi selflessly encouraged Ruth to follow her lead in order to find security among "her people and her gods" (1:15). Ruth's response contains some of the greatest words of personal commitment to be found in Scripture. Her words are frequently a part of wedding ceremonies binding man and wife, but originally the words were from a daughter-in-law to her mother-in-law.

Ruth declared her lifelong commitment to Naomi by vowing to go and stay wherever she went and stayed. Further, instead of returning to her Moabite people and gods, she decided to attach herself to Naomi's people and God. Ruth vowed to die in the same land as Naomi, marking her promise as a lifelong commitment. Just as Naomi had expressed love by acting in her family member's best interests, Ruth expressed love by declaring full commitment to Naomi.

3. Demonstration of Commitment

(Ruth 1:18; 2:2-3)

Naomi acquiesced in the light of Ruth's commitment; she ceased trying to convince her to return to Moab (1:18). The two widows journeyed to Bethlehem. Yet, if a woman's well being was tied to her father or husband, how would two widows survive?

Ruth demonstrated her commitment by volunteering to work in the fields and gather scraps of the crop the harvesters left behind.

(2:2). Ruth's industriousness in doing the hard work of gleaning was blessed by the fact she unknowingly gleaned in the field of Naomi's wealthy kinsman, Boaz (2:3). Ruth successfully converted her declaration of commitment into a demonstration of commitment. Naomi's needs would be met through the loyalty and hard work of her daughter-in-law.

4. Rewards of Commitment (Ruth 2:11-12)

As Ruth gleaned in Boaz's field, Boaz himself came to inspect the harvest. Being told of Ruth's identity, Boaz took steps

to ensure Ruth could glean the fields and drink the water without being harassed. Ruth asked Boaz why he extended her such favor. He responded by saying, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law" (2:11). He knew of her decision to forsake the security of her family and homeland in order to take care of Naomi, even though it meant living with a people she "did not know before" (2:11b).

Boaz, a godly man, did not stop with merely expressing Ruth would be able to glean. He also prayed that the Lord would repay her for what she had done for Naomi. He asked the Lord to richly reward her (2:12). The phrase, "under whose wings you have come to take refuge" was a metaphor for God's protection. The term for "wings" occurs only here and in 3:9, where Ruth requests Boaz to spread the corner (wing) of his garment over her. God would meet Naomi's and Ruth's needs through Ruth's new husband, Naomi's kinsman.

As believers, we can express loving words and actions to our own families and to others. First, we can act in family member's best interests. Second, we can declare our commitment to them. Third, we can do our part to meet family member's needs. Finally, we can rejoice that the Lord rewards us for commitment to our families.

VanHorn is dean of Christian Studies at Mississippi College, Clinton.

Rise Above Discouragement • Jeremiah 19:14-20:13

We continue to reflect on the life and ministry of the prophet Jeremiah as an example of the person God uses to accomplish His work. First, we learned that we are to make no excuses when God calls us to serve. Next, we discovered that we are to prepare to minister with a heart that is broken for the things that wound the heart of the Father. This week, we face the fact that we are to expect periods of discouragement on the service road. Daily, we are to ask God to help us rise above anyone or anything that would seek to defeat us and silence the message.

In Jeremiah 20, we join the prophet on his roller coaster of ministry. The ride is filled with ups and downs and unexpected twists and turns. Both Testaments describe the activity of our enemy whose main goal is to distract, discourage and defeat the messengers of God with a direct frontal attack against the message. The message is simple. God is holy. Man is sinful. God calls us to come to Him. God promises then delivers a Redeemer. Obedience unveils the blessings of God. Disobedience derails them.

Jeremiah determines to be faithful to deliver the message from God concerning the soon coming destruction of Jerusalem by an enemy "from the north." Here in chapter

20, he identifies the enemy to be Babylon. His passion for speaking truth earns him a severe beating and a day and a night in chains, courtesy of Pashhur, the chief officer and priest in the temple. Upon his release, Jeremiah has an additional bit of truth for Pashhur himself. "Pashhur" means to tear down and tear apart, a picture of total destruction. Jeremiah announces Pashhur's new God-given name which means "terror on every side." Jeremiah pronounces that this "Mister Terror" will be terrorized, completely deprived, exiled and left to die in a foreign, hostile country. Then, like Elijah and Jonah and countless other biblical characters, Jeremiah signs up for membership in Club Woe Is Me. He has an itty bitty pity party and blames it all on God.

We have all been there at one time or another: "God, why in the world did you CALL me to do THIS? I quit. But wait,

Lord! When I even think about quitting, Your call is still there and Your message is burning inside me like a fire. Even in my deepest despair, I see You standing to defend me and set me back on Your path for my life. Though friends forsake me, You never will. I know you will turn my sorrow into song."

Bible Studies for Life

with Becky Brown

God calls. On your darkest ministry days, the call of God shines brightest. During an evacuation of some of our missionaries from the country of Liberia in 1994, I felt led to write them the following note of encouragement. "These are the days you lean only on the Lord of the call. He is the peace of eternity in the chaos of the temporary." I have talked to ministry partners about times of discouragement. One after another has given testimony to the fact that when they were ready to throw in the towel, they remained to wash feet because of that certain call from God. Never

forsake the call of God.

God cares. Five hundred or so years after Jeremiah, the Apostle Paul would pen a letter to believers in Galatia. Through the inspiration of God, he would proclaim that they should not grow weary in well doing for in due season they would reap if they did not faint or remain discouraged with their task. Burnout is real, but God has the remedy for personal renewal in the face of discouragement. God wants us to talk to Him every day, on the good days and certainly on the tough days. He understands how it feels to be rejected, wounded, refused and misunderstood. Whatever hurts you touches Him deeply. Never reject the care of God.

God comforts and consoles. Ministers of the flock of God and caregivers of patients are very similar. When they feel defeated or become discouraged, they still care, but they have temporarily run out of the ability to give. Sometimes the most spiritual thing a person can do is rest. The evangelist Vance Havner reminded us many times that we must come aside to rest or we will come apart. Never ignore the comfort and consolation of God.

Brown is the staff evangelist at First Church, Richland.

CRUSADE

cont. from p. 1

here," Bob Emrich of Protect Marriage Maine — which is trying to defeat a same sex marriage ballot initiative — wrote in an email to like-minded supporters.

"Once the definition of marriage is changed, the government

will come after anyone who refuses to go along. The implications of the threats from these powerful mayors is clear: If you do not go along, you will be punished."

The controversy over Chick-fil-A began when company president Dan Cathy told the Biblical Recorder newspaper in North Carolina that Chick-fil-A is "very much supportive of the family —

the biblical definition of the family unit." A radio interview then surfaced in which he had said, "I think we are inviting God's judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say, 'We know better than You as to what constitutes a marriage.'"

Chick-fil-A's donations to groups that support biblical marriage also became an issue.

The mayors of Boston and Chicago initially threatened to block new Chick-fil-A restaurants in their cities, with Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel saying, "Chick-fil-A's values are not Chicago values."

In a tweet, Washington D.C. Mayor Vincent Gray called the restaurant's food "hate chicken" and said its "support of bigotry is

an embarrassment."

San Francisco Mayor Edwin M. Lee tweeted, "Closest #Chick-fil-A to San Francisco is 40 miles away & I strongly recommend that they not try to come any closer."

Philadelphia, Pa., Councilman James Kenney told National Public Radio that Cathy's comments amounted to "hate speech."

Vacation Bible School



BLACKWATER CHURCH, KEMPER: received an offering of \$175 for the Baptist Children's Village. Heath Riggs, pastor; Nichole Sanders, VBS director.



IMMANUEL CHURCH, GREENWOOD: Shown are the participants.



FIRST CHURCH, ROSE HILL: Average attendance, 25, with one profession of faith.



CONE-HATTA CHURCH, NEWTON: July 9 - 13; enrollment, 86; average attendance, 78; four professions of faith with two already baptized; total offering, \$428; Jimmy Jones, pastor.



MT. OLIVET, SCOTT COUNTY: June 17 - 22; average attendance, 83; three professions of faith; led by John Yates, with a record-breaking collection of canned goods for the Carlisle Crisis Center, Scott County; Bruce Robinson, pastor.



The offering emphasis at **LUDLOW CHURCH, LUDLOW,** was Funds 4 Food - Pop the Preacher. The class that collected the largest amount got to "pop the preacher" with two wet sponges during the Family Night Celebration. \$231.68 was collected for the Scott County Association Food Bank.



CALVARY CHURCH, GREENVILLE: July 23 - 27, with a special offering collected for the Women's Resource Center, Greenville. Susan Stokes, VBS director; Greg Lassett, pastor.



KOKOMO CHURCH, MARION COUNTY: Average attendance, 105.



FELLOWSHIP CHURCH, STARKVILLE: Shown are the participants on the last night of VBS.